



DISCOVER AFRICA

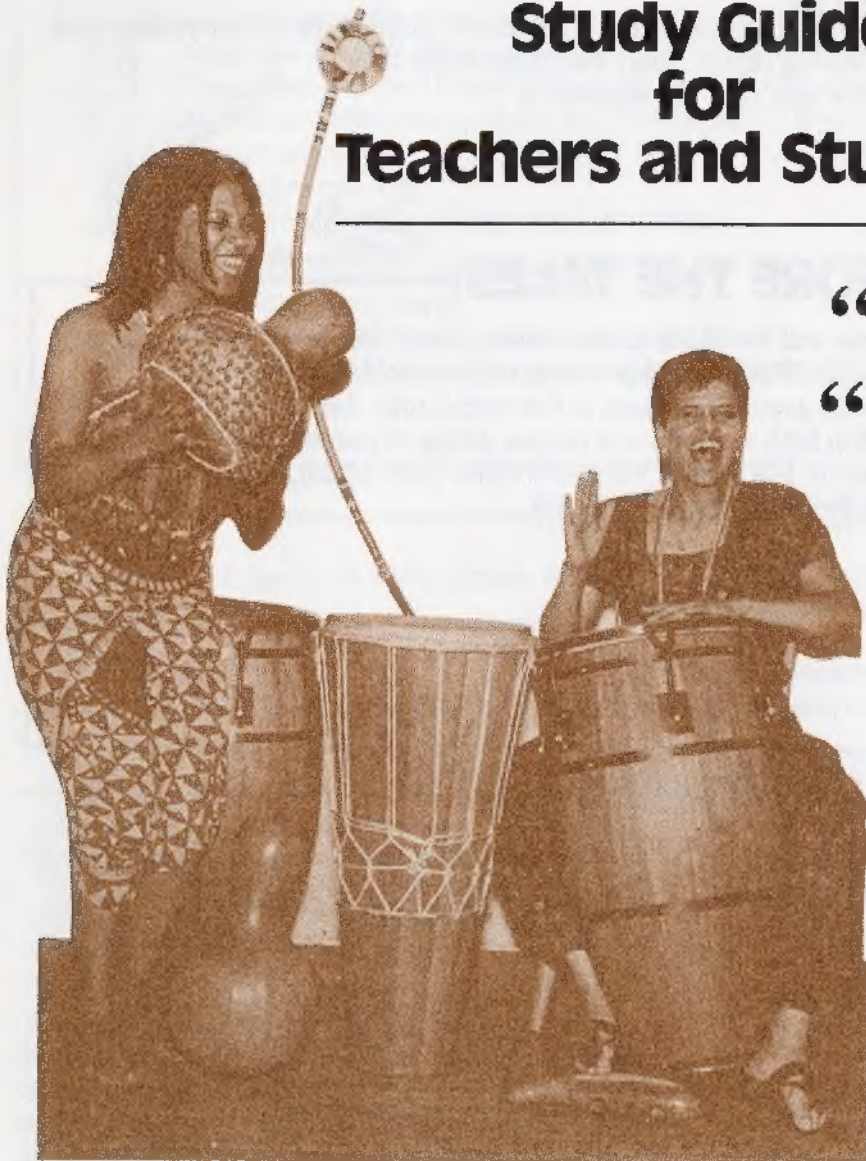
MUSIC, FOLKTALES AND CRAFTS

Study Guide for Teachers and Students

**“YEH! CRIC”
“YEH! CRAC”**

When Caribbean storytellers told their tales, they would stop in the middle of a story and ask, “Yeh! Cric” to make sure their listeners were paying attention. The audience would answer, “Yeh! Crac” to show that they were. It is in this spirit that we will ask our young listeners the same question today.

**Teacher's Note: Please read the background information aloud to your students the day before the storytelling begins.*



BACKGROUND



Folktales are very old stories. They are passed down from generation to generation — parents tell their children stories that their parents told them. When people move from one country to another, they tell their *old* stories in the *new* land.

When Africans were kidnapped and brought to America to work as slaves, they brought their tales with them. That is why many folktales that are told by black people in America are almost the same as folktales that are told by Black people in African countries.

Many African folktales are stories about animals. In these stories, the animals have human feelings and thoughts. Often the main character is a “trickster,” a small, clever animal who can outsmart bigger, stronger animals. Many of these stories teach a lesson. But sometimes they are told just to make people laugh.

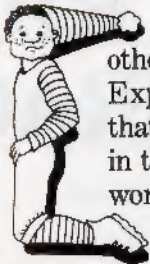
Storytellers tell stories and folktales to share their feelings and thoughts with other people. The art of storytelling is as old as folktales. Some people say that it is as old as dancing and singing.

In African countries, storytelling was once very important. Storytellers were highly respected in the community where they lived. They were the historians for their people. They remembered and told stories about important events that happened long ago.

Today, storytelling is still very important in many African countries. Many African storytellers use music and poetry to help them tell their stories better. Many storytellers like their listeners to participate in the story to show that they are enjoying it.



BEFORE THE TALES



Explain that the folktales that will be told tomorrow came from Africa or were brought to other countries by African people. Make available a map of the world, and point out Africa. Explain that Africa is the second largest continent in the world, only Asia is larger. Explain that it is a vast land that is rich in both minerals and people. About 10 percent of all the people in the world live in Africa. Most of the world's diamonds come from Africa, and much of the world's gold, copper and uranium are found there, too.



THE TALES

Song: Pomba Girah (Brazil)

An African-Brazilian ode to the wife of the god Eshu, the God of the Crossroads.

The Storyteller (Ethiopia, East Africa)

Adapted by Pamela Patrick

A king, bored by his subjects' tales, offers a pot of gold to the storyteller who can tell a story that will make him utter the words, “enough, enough, no more.” A humble storyteller uses her wits to come up with a story that wins her the prize.

The Jackal and the Hen (Namibia, South West Africa)

Adapted by Gale Jackson



The lazy jackal tries to convince the hard-working hen that he will fly up into her tree and bite her legs unless she gives him her eggs. Her common sense tells her that jackals can't fly, but he tricks her into believing him. Her gullibility costs her three eggs, but she also learns three important lessons.

Song: **Alakitijo** (Thief) (Nigeria, West Africa)

Epaminondas (Jamaica)

Adapted by Tiye Giraud

Song by Tiye Giraud

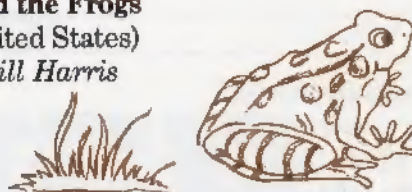
A young Jamaican boy constantly gets into trouble because he forgets to use his common sense.



The Coon and the Frogs

(Southern United States)

Adapted by Bill Harris



Brer Coon is a poor fisherman, so he asks his friend Brer Rabbit to help him catch some frogs. Brer Rabbit suggests that he pretend he's dead. He then tells the frogs to bury him. The frogs, convinced that Brer Coon is dead, dig a deep hole. When the hole is finished, Brer Coon suddenly comes back to life, and he and Brer Rabbit enjoy a meal of frogs.

AFTER THE TALES



he next day, make a world map available to the class. Write down the title of each tale. Then locate the country where each folktale originated. Mark each country with a colorful marker. Then point out the United States and mark it with a marker. Attach a piece of string or yarn from each tale's country of origin to the United States to show students the distance that each folktale traveled.

Ask your students the following questions:

- Did the folktales teach lessons?
- What did you learn?
- Was the music an important part of the tales?
- Did the music make the tales easier to understand?



NEW WORDS

Ashiko (ah SHE koe) — A West African drum

Balafon (bah la FONE) — A wooden piano that is played with sticks.

Conga (KOUN ga) — A West African drum that has many tones.

Dun-Dun (djune-djune) — An African drum shaped like an hour glass that can imitate human speech. It is sometimes called a talking drum.

Gourd — Plants that include pumpkins and squash. Gourds that are dried and hollow can be used as instruments.

Guero (GWEE-row) — A serrated gourd that is played with a stick.

Hindewho (HEN de who) — A one-note flute that is made of bamboo.

Kalimba (kah-LEM-bah) — A piano played with the thumbs.

Pandiero (pan DAY row) — A tamborine-like instrument with a drum skin and metal shingles.

Percussion Instrument — An instrument that produces a tone when it is struck.

Rhythm — A regular pattern of movement or beats.

Shekere (SHAKE er ray) — An instrument that is made from a gourd, has a beaded skirt, and is used like a rattle.

Tambourin (tam bow REEN) — An African-Brazilian tambourine.

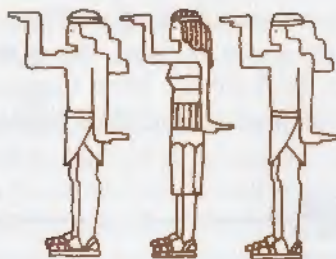
Tonette (tone-ETTE) — A tiny flute made from plastic.

Tradition — Stories, beliefs, and customs that are handed down from parents to children.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Folktale Drawings

Make construction paper and crayons available to each child. Have each student choose his or her favorite folktale and illustrate the part of the tale that he or she enjoyed most. Display their drawings in a bulletin board display.



Personal Folktales

Ask your students to choose a favorite animal character from a cartoon show, book, or poem and create a folktale about him or her. Have them share their folktales with the class.

Family Folktales

Ask each student to ask an older relative to recall a folktale that he or she heard as a child. Have them write down these folktales and tell them to the class during a special storytelling session.

NEW BOOKS

We used the following books as resources. They may also be helpful to you:

An African Experience: Traditions Through African Arts (1981)

(A Discovery Experience Guide) Education Office at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.

The Days When the Animals Talked, by William J. Faulkner, Follett Publishing (1977)

A Treasury of Afro-American Folklore, by Harold Courlander, Crown Publishers (1976)

The New Encyclopedia Britannica (Volume 13)

The World Book Encyclopedia (Volume A)

Your students may enjoy the following books:

The Golden Lynx and Other Tales, by Augusta Baker, Lippincott (1960)

Ashanti to Zulu, by Margaret Musgrove, Dial Press (1976)

Afro-Bets ABC Book, by Cheryl Willis Hudson, Just Us Books (1987)

The People Could Fly, by Virginia Hamilton, Knopf (1985)

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